



For more information including online registration go to: www.reslutheran.com/bibleforlife

Session Summaries

Each of the following session is scheduled to last approximately 45 minutes, except the electives, which are 1 ½ hours each.

Sat 15 August

1 Overview of the Biblical story

A quick run through the story of the narrative from the creation of the world to the second coming of Christ. The whole of the Bible is written in the context of this narrative, which follows the story of God's people on earth, their sins and failures, their gradual development of understanding of who they are and what they are here for. The story of Jesus will be placed in its important historical context.

2 Abraham through to the Exodus – the structure of the story and the covenant theme

The story of Abraham's family is one of tension and anticipation. Will God keep his promises? This is the prelude to the story of salvation, and provides Old Testament and New Testament theology with early bearings. We will also explore some of the beliefs of the ancient world through this story.

3-4 Elective - The names of God

A Jewish saying asserts, "of the many gifts God has given us, the most precious is his name." This elective will explore the many names of God in the Bible, and their importance to an understanding of the teaching of the Bible. Why are there so many names for God? What do God's names tell us about what kind of God he is?

3-4 Elective - The adventures of Jacob the Cheat

Jacob is also known as Israel, and is that nation's father. What kind of man was this? What kind of father gives one of his twelve sons a coat of many colours? We will explore the nature of family life in this ancient patriarchal society and grapple with the way God works with the material he finds!

5 Cultural background to help understand the OT - religion and social structures

In this session we will further develop an understanding of ancient world thinking, especially in the area of religion. What was pagan worship like, and how did it differ from what Israel did? What did the ancient world think of idols, sacrifice, the relationship between the gods and the world? What was unique about Biblical insights into worship?

6 David through to the Exile – the structure of the story and the covenant theme

This session covers the period in which Israel was ruled by kings of various dynasties. We will look at the overall structure of that history, without too much detail, and then draw out the special themes that dominate later theology: covenant and Messiah

7-8 Elective - David and his family

What sort of man does is David, arguably Israel's greatest king and favourite saint? How does Bathsheba fit into this portrait of man of faith?

7-8 Elective - Introduction to OT Poetry

Poetry is a very important part of the life and especially the shared cultural life of the ancients. Find out how poetry operates in the Old Testament and, in doing so, discover a key to unlocking a large portion of the Old Testament writings.

Sun 16 August

1 Introduction to the prophets

Prophet has a quite different meaning in the Old Testament than it does in our times. In this session we discover how prophets operate and how they relate to God and the nation, and the part they played in shaping history. No plaster saints here, and no passive channels of divine words. There might be a few surprises.

2-3 Elective - Jonah and the mission of Israel

The story of a failed prophet, who did the opposite of what God told him and then complained when God showed mercy to a nation. A very interesting book that speaks of the mission of Israel – and the church – in the wider world.

2-3 Elective - Hosea and the failure of marriage

Hosea is a prophet who marries a woman of loose morals and discovers a great deal from his experience about human relationships and about God.

4 Prophecy and fulfilment

Here we develop the theme of prophecy a bit further, especially with respect to how words spoken in ancient times relate to things that happen then and later – what sort of things prophets did, and how their 'prophecies' play out as the future unfolds. What did Jesus 'fulfil'? What connection does prophecy have with us now?

Sat 29 August

1 Creation and new creation

One of the most important themes in the Bible is that of creation. Here we look at how this theme links the two testaments and continues to affect our lives today. How does God's creation of the world relate to science? How does creation at the beginning connect with the emergence of new things today? How are we involved in this act of creation?

2 New covenant and expectations

Another theme of great importance – we explore how this Old Testament theme helps us understand who we are today as the Church.

3 Life in NT Times

An introduction to what things were like in the days of Jesus – what were towns and cities like? What did people eat? How did they carry out their daily lives? How were they affected by world events?

4 Introduction to the story of the NT

A short overview of the story told in the New Testament in the context of the times.

5 Introduction to the letters and gospels

We explore the way the different gospels tell the story of Jesus and how that helps us understand more about the story and the people who first told and heard it. This will help us apply it more effectively in our own lives. This session includes an introduction to the kinds of writing that were around in those days.

6 The passion narratives

The story of the last week of Jesus' life – told from various points of view. Here is the heart of the story of salvation, the fulfilment of the whole Old Testament, set in the turbulent times of the Roman Empire. We explore various aspects of the Last Supper and Holy Communion, and the death of Jesus as people understood it then.

Sun 30 August

1 Resurrection and Ascension

We look at the various accounts of Jesus' resurrection, the single account of his ascension, and the impact it had on the original writers and hearers.

2-3 Elective - The Parables of Jesus

Everyone knows that Jesus taught in parables, and that his teaching was powerful. What is this teaching form? How widely used were they, and how can we best read them today?

2-3 Elective - Introduction to the book of Revelation

An introduction to this fascinating last book of the Bible, which has been the happy hunting ground of strange ideas since soon after it was written. This elective will provide a way of making sense of it without recourse to wild speculation.

4 The Story of the Early Church and the Bible

The course concludes with the story of the early Church – its first three centuries in outline – and the development of the Bible. How were the books chosen? Were any rejected? How do we read the Bible?

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